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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes a study on how interpersonal communication patterns within the family affect the political socialization of the child specifically, the acquisition of norms for adult citizenship roles. The data was collected in a 1968 survey of 1300 families in five eastern Wisconsin cities. One child from each family completed two self-administered questionnaires, and one parent was interviewed afterward. A wide range of political and socioeconomic groupings were provided for, and the sample was about equally divided between junior high and senior high adolescents. The analysis tests the hypothesis that a family communication environment combining a weak socio-relations orientation with a strong concept-orientation, pluralistic home, will stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization than other types of environment. The other types are: 1) protective families which stress socio-relations or restrictions at the expense of concept-relations; and, 2) consensual families where the child is constrained to develop concepts that are consonant with existing socio-relations. The results show that pluralistic students expect that social norms will involve a greater level of political participation. Students from homes where concept orientation is emphasized tend to think that these obligations will be expected of them; socio-orientation tends to be unrelated to the level of norm learning. Concept and socio-orientation were positively related to the learning intensity measures. (Author/SBE)

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FAMILY COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT AND CITIZENSHIP NORM ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT
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Studies of political socialization focus on the developmental processes through which political orientations and patterns of behavior are acquired. Many of the orientations learned by the child, however, are of no use to him at the time he learns them. The adoption of values of a group to which the individual does not yet belong is called "anticipatory socialization." This paper examines how interpersonal communication patterns within the family affect the acquisition of norms for adult citizenship roles.

Research by McLeod and Chaffee has shown that the structure of the family's communication patterns plays an important role in the political socialization of the child. They suggest that both the content and the method of parent-child communication are crucial: what the parent knows may be less significant than how he transmits it to the child.

This analysis of 1,300 families in Wisconsin tests the hypothesis that a family communication environment combining a weak socio-relations orientation with a strong concept-orientation (called the pluralistic home) will stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization than other types of environment. The dependent variable was operationalized by three measures of adolescent perceptions of what other people will feel are their citizenship obligations when they are 25 years old.

The results show that pluralistic students expect that social norms will involve a greater level of political participation in terms of writing to politicians and newspapers, attending meetings and rallies, and working in political campaigns. More generally, students from homes where concept orientation is emphasized tend to think that these obligations will be expected of them; this relationship decreases only slightly when parental education and income are controlled. Socio-orientation tends to be unrelated to the level of norm learning.

Analyses of the intensity of norm learning, regardless of direction, were performed to determine the degree of certainty with which the expectations were held. Pluralistics and consensuals were very similar on these measures, while protectives and laissez-faires were less certain about what others will expect of them in the future. Unexpectedly, socio-orientation was positively related to the intensity measures.

Within the past few years, a new area of political science study has emerged: political socialization. Easton and Dennis (1969) define it simply as "those developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behavior." Sigel (1965) adds the notion that political norms and behaviors which are acceptable to an ongoing system are transmitted from generation to generation, indicating that the process is carried on with more purpose and planning. Research in political socialization usually centers around the child's knowledge of and affect for the President, the policeman, and other governmental people and objects he encounters in school, at home, or via the mass media.

Many of the orientations the child learns, however, are of no use to him at the time he learns them. Civics classes stress the importance of voting, yet the minimum age limit in the various states ranges from 18 to 21 years of age. Young children see adults working for candidates and political parties, yet they are too young to effectively participate themselves. Children learn of the responsiveness of government; indeed, many feel that citizens can bring problems and requests directly to the President (Easton and Dennis). Yet most school-age children are too young to bring their opinions to politicians and newspapers.

Merton (1957) used the term "anticipatory socialization" to refer to a situation where an individual adopts the values of a group which he does not belong to, or cannot belong to for a period

of time. He suggests that such individuals who adopt the values of a group to which they aspire receive two distinct benefits from this anticipatory socialization: the orientation they have learned aids their rise into the group, and it also eases their adjustment after they finally do become a part of it. This mode of learning is very similar to imitation, according to Dawson and Prewitt (1969). Law students and medical students begin to think and act like lawyers and doctors long before they graduate and actually enter those professions. Student government leaders often take on mannerisms and styles they consider appropriate for the politician. And the child who learns that good citizens are knowledgeable about public affairs may begin to read relevant sections of the newspaper or weekly reader at school.

What happens to a child who learns information he cannot use? How does he act toward a political process which he cannot effectively deal with for several years? Furthermore, questions can be asked regarding the role of interpersonal communication in this process. What part does it play in teaching norms for adult citizenship roles? What can the family teach the child about potential behaviors he might use as an adult? This study attempts to answer these questions, and assess the role of the family in anticipatory socialization of their children.

RELATED STUDIES

Wheeler (1966) notes that there are few studies of this pre-entry period. And even where these studies do exist, they

tend to be confined to only one agency such as the school, the church, the family, or the mass media. Langton (1970) agrees that most socialization research has been on single agency analysis, explaining that researchers "are still in the process of isolating different characteristics of these institutions and their relationships to politics."

Chaffee, Ward and Tipton (1970) point out, for example, that while there has been a great deal of research on political socialization, and on adolescent media-use, these areas rarely overlap. Most media-use studies usually involve younger children, while the political socialization studies usually look at political knowledge and trust, treating media-use as a dependent variable or as a secondary agent of socialization.

Wheeler explains that most people are introduced to a new organization only after they have had time to think about it and develop some perspective. Some developmental systems may select their recruits long before they actually arrive, allowing time for each to prepare for the other. "Since much activity may go on between the decision to enter a program and actual participation," Wheeler says, "it seems likely that a considerable amount of the socialization effect is achieved before the person enters." He points out that in organizations where there is less opportunity for advance preparation, the recruit experiences a great deal of shock during the period of entry.

Hess and Torney (1967) cite three types of anticipatory socialization. First is the acquisition of attitudes and values

about adult roles. These form the basis for subsequent learning of specific behavior. Second is the acquisition of specific information which cannot be directly applied until later life. Finally, the third type is the learning of skills which can be practiced in the immediate childhood situation and which will be called into play throughout life when the appropriate occasions arise.

Riley, Foner, Hess and Toby (1969) explain that the parent often communicates to the adolescent expectations that the child may incorporate into his own self-expectations in the usual way. Moore (1969) says that maturation consists in part of "making more realistic judgments of objective opportunities and personal capacities." While the child fumbles for an identity, he is preparing for a prospective identity. Merton asserts that the individual receiving anticipatory socialization will find readier acceptance by that group and will make an easier adjustment to it.

Kagan and Moss (1962) suggest that during the age period 6 to 10, important changes begin occuring in children's behavior. One of the major events is that the child begins to identify with the parents and tries to adopt both the values and responses of the parents. These authors have been especially concerned with developmental continuities dealing with children's behavior.

Certainly the family is of great importance in political socialization. Lane (1959) says that a father performs several basic methods of indoctrinating political values in his son. Among

them is serving as a model for imitation so that the son can pick up the "loyalties, beliefs, and values" of his father.

Jennings and Niemi (1968) also discuss the impact of the family:

> Whether the child is conscious or unaware of the impact, whether the process is role-modeling or overt transmission, whether the values are political and directly usable or "nonpolitical" but transferable, and whether what is passed on lies in the cognitive or affective realm, it has been argued that the family is of paramount importance.

Maccoby (1959) adds an interesting idea on the role of the family in political socialization. She suggests that the child practices the actions of the adults with whom he is frequently in contact with, and thus acquires a "repertoire of actions." These covertly-practiced actions remain latent until a much later time, however, when the individual will be in a role position that the actions would suit. Her hypothesis basically states that the child learns certain forms of political behavior from the parents, rehearses them covertly, and then manifests them when he is faced with a "real political role."

FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Many researchers have found that the structure of the family's communication patterns contributes highly to the political socialization of the child. It can be viewed as accounting for more of the variance in political socialization than many factors within the family, including the parents' political knowledge and participation, and factors outside of the family

such as political stimulation from peers, school, and the mass media.

Of all the factors in adolescent development, the home is thus one of the most pervasive. Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman (1971) point out that the home is "the only social institution in which almost every child has been involved since birth." Elkin (1960) says the family has a key role in affecting political orientations -- it has a dominant role in the development of basic personality traits and other social attitudes and values. Dawson and Prewitt explain that the family has almost a monopoly on the child during his formative years, when "the foundation of his political self is being developed."

Adolescence is an important time in the youth's life to study because family influences on socialization are at their peak. They have been accumulating for years, but career-centered socializing institutions have not affected the child yet.

Parent-child communication is important not only for the content but also for the method involved. Political socialization is not automatic. What the parent knows may be less important than how he transmits it to his child (Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman, 1966). Every family develops its own patterns of parent-child communication, with major and consistent differences arising between families in this pattern.

The "family communication patterns" theory proposed by McLeod and Chaffee is a conception of socialization which has been applied mainly in the political socialization area. Many studies in this

area have hypothesized that competent participation in public affairs is stimulated by a particular type of communication pattern within the family (McLeod, Chaffee and Eswara, 1966; McLeod, Chaffee and Wackman, 1967; Chaffee et al., 1966).

Parent-child relations are usually described as a one-dimensional portrayal of the family power structure. McLeod and Chaffee (1971) explain that usual dichotomies include "autocratic-democratic," "controlling-permissive," and "traditional-modern." The study of communication presents a different picture, though. Several studies have shown at least two relatively uncorrelated dimensions of communication structure in families (Chaffee et al., 1966, 1971; McLeod et al., 1966, 1967; Wackman, 1968; Eswara, 1968; Stone and Chaffee, 1970).

The first dimension can be called socio-oriented. This type is indicated by the type of communication producing deference and fostering harmony and pleasant social relationships in the family. McLeod and Chaffee (1971) explain that a child may be taught to defer to his elders, or give in on arguments rather than risk offending others.

The other dimension is concept-oriented. This is concerned with positive constraints which stimulate the child to develop his own views about the world. The child is urged to consider more than one side of an issue. The parents, for example, may encourage him to weigh all the evidence before deciding on an issue, or they may expose him to counter-arguments on various issues.

These two dimensions have proven uncorrelated in a variety of populations. The sample for this study has been divided into relatively "high" and "low" groups on each dimension, yielding a fourfold typology of family types with approximately equal numbers in each cell. (See Table 1)

---------- Table 1 about here ----------

Chaffee et al. (1971) describe the four types of families according to the type of relations they stress. LAISSEZ-FAIRE families emphasize neither type of relation. Children are not prohibited from challenging parental views, and they are not exposed to information relevant to expressing independent ideas.

PROTECTIVE families stress socio-relations at the expense of concept-relations. The child is encouraged to get along with others by steering clear of the controversial realm of ideas. Not only is he prohibited from expressing dissent, but he is given little chance to encounter information on which to base his views.

PLURALISTIC families emphasize the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. The child is encouraged to explore new ideas and is often exposed to controversial material; thus, he can make up his own mind without fear that reaching a different conclusion from his parents will endanger social relations in the family.

CONSENSUAL families stress both types of relations. While the child is exposed to controversy, he is constrained to develop concepts that are consonant with the existing socio-relations.

From the child's viewpoint, he should learn his parents' ideas and adopt their values.

Not all families conform perfectly to these types. In some, one parent may stress ideas; the other may stress social relations. Even different children within one family may receive different emphases from the parents.

McLeod and Chaffee report that blue-collar homes show some tendency to stress the socio-orientation, while white-collar families give more attention to concept-orientation (McLeod and Chaffee, 1971).

Based on these types of family communication patterns, the basic hypothesis is offered that a family communication environment combining weak socio-orientation with a relatively strong concept-orientation (the pluralistic home) will stimulate a greater degree of anticipatory socialization than the other types of environments. In particular, children from pluralistic homes will be more aware of their rights and obligations as citizens, including the opportunities to work in campaigns, write to politicians, and attend political meetings. Both the factors of the pluralistic home -- weak socio-orientation and strong concept-orientation -- are needed to stimulate anticipatory socialization. Neither factor alone will be sufficient.

Because the pluralistic child does not have socio-oriented constraints, he is free to find new ways of thinking and he should express them, even if others disagree. It is the level of concept-oriented emphasis that stimulates him to do so. By contrast,

the other three types lack certain requirements. The protective child does not have the concept-orientation; the consensual child, who is exposed to a strong concept-orientation, is nonetheless affected by the constraints toward social harmony, and the laissez-faire child lacks necessary stimulation from the home to seek information and express his ideas.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The data used in this study was collected in a 1968 survey in five eastern Wisconsin cities of 1,300 families. A child from each family completed two self-administered questionnaires in school in May and November, and one parent of each child was interviewed afterward. A wide range of political and socioeconomic groupings were provided in selection of cities. According to the 1960 census, the populations of the cities, located in Milwaukee and the Fox River Valley regions, ranged from 17,000 to 68,000.

The sample was about equally divided between two grade levels -- the junior high sample contained seventh-graders in May and eighth-graders in November; the senior high group consisted of tenth-graders in May and elevanth-graders in November.

In order to measure the amount of socio-orientation within the family, the parent and child were asked separately about a number of kinds of interaction that would encourage this type of orientation in the youngster. The scores were then summed to provide a single index for each parent-child pair. Some of the typical items for socio-orientation were:

1. (Parent) urges (child) to give in on arguments rather than risk antagonizing others.

2. (Parent) answers (child's) arguments by saying something like, "You'll know better when you grow up."

3. (Parent) lets (child) know that (child) should not show anger in a group.

4. (Parent) stresses that there are some things in life that are either right or wrong.

5. (Parent) says that the best way to stay out of trouble is to keep away from it.

6. (Parent) says that discussions are better if you keep them pleasant.

The concept-orientation relation was measured similarly; frequency and emphasis estimates by parent and child were summed across many items, providing a single index of concept-orientation. Sample items include:

1. (Parent) encourages (child) to challenge (parent's) ideas and beliefs.

2. (Parent) asks (child's) opinion when family is discussing something.

3. (Parent and child) have family talks about topics like politics or religion, where some persons take different sides from others.

4. (Parent) says that (child) should always look at both sides of an issue before making up (child's) mind.

5. (Parent) argues about things like politics or religion when visiting with friends or relatives, when (child) is present.

Anticipatory socialization was measured by three questions to the child: "For these statements, what do you think other people will feel are your obligations <u>when you are 25</u> to do these things?" An answer scale ranged from "must do this" and

"probably should" to "may or may not," "probably should not," and "must not do this." There was also space for a "don't know" response. The three items were:

a. Work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.

b. Write to politicians or newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.

c. Attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.

These measures deal with one specific aspect of anticipatory socialization: norm learning -- the expectations people have for your behavior. The items were intended to measure the extent to which these students have learned various norms for adult citizenship roles. The three items above represent potential behaviors an adult might use as a citizen.

Our main interest focuses on differences in the level of norm learning across the four family types. This dependent variable indicates the direction and degree of norm learning ranging from "must do this" to "must not do this." In addition, the intensity of norm learning and the number of "don't know" responses are examined to determine if the students from pluralistic homes tend to gain stronger normative expectations, irregardless of direction. It is predicted that these adolescents will be more certain of the obligations that are expected of them as citizens.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On each dependent variable, about 10% of the overall sample reported that they didn't know what other people will feel are their obligations. Most of the students thought that others will

feel that they probably should or may or may not have obligations to participate in the political system. On the five-step scale (must do this = 5, through must not do this = 1), writing to politicians and newspapers was rated most positively ($\bar{x}$= 3.46), followed closely by attending rallies or meetings (3.43). The obligation to work in political campaigns was slightly lower (3.32). The mean intensity of participation for the three variables followed a similar pattern (writing to politicians and newspapers, 1.52; attending meetings or rallies, 1.50, and working in political campaigns, 1.35).

The main analysis involves differences according to the pattern of family communication experienced by the child. As predicted, Table 2 shows that the students from pluralistic homes ranked highest on each dependent variable (overall $\bar{x}$= 10.61), followed by consensuals in each case (10.30). The laissez-faires and protectives were much lower (9.95, 9.92). The differences between pluralistics and each of the other three groups is significant ($p<.05$, t tests), and the magnitude of these differences does not vary substantially from one type of participation to another.

As Table 3 shows, the pluralistics and consensuals were very similar with respect to the intensity of norm learning. Overall, the pluralistics had a slightly lower proportion indicating that they did not know what others will expect of them when they are 25 years old. (overall $\bar{x}$= 4.55 vs. 4.52; 6.7% vs. 8.3%). The protectives ranked third (overall $\bar{x}$= 4.32), and the laissez-faires were lowest (4.09). Overall, the children from families where concept orientation was emphasized (pluralistics and consensuals) had an average 7% "don't know" rate, compared to 12% among those with backgrounds where

concept orientation was not emphasized, a significant difference (<.001, chi-square test). The overall intensity of high-concept groups was also significantly higher than that of low-concept groups ($p<.01$, t test).

To explore the relative contribution of the socio and concept factors in anticipatory socialization, overall correlations between each dimension and the level of the three dependent variables were analyzed. Table 4 shows that the zero-order correlation coefficient between concept orientation and working in political campaigns is +.14; for writing to politicians and newspapers, the correlation is +.12, and the correlation is +.16 for attending rallies or meetings. All of these correlations are significant ($p<.01$). The predicted negative relationships were obtained on the socio dimension, although the correlations were not strong (-.04 overall). Thus, socio-orientation was negligibly related to the political participation variables, while concept-orientation was consistently associated with these measures in the hypothesized direction.

Table 4 also reports the partial correlations for these variables, controlling for both parental education and income. Since there is a slight tendency for children from a higher socio-economic background to be in the pluralistic category, while those from lower SES homes tend to experience a laissez-faire or protective family communication environment, the effect of this factor was statistically controlled. The results indicate only a slight decrease in the magnitude of the relationships, and the concept orientation correlations remain significant at the .01 level (see Table 4).

The correlations between concept orientation and the intensity of norm learning on each measure were slightly lower: +.11 for working in campaigns; +.08 for writing to politicians and newspapers, and +.11 for attending rallies or meetings (See Table 5). Socio orientation was actually positively related to these measures, and these correlations increase when SES was controlled.

The overall evidence lends support to the hypothesis that pluralistic students expect that social norms will involve a great level of political participation during adulthood. More generally, children from homes where a concept orientation is emphasized tend to think that these obligations will be expected of them. The socio dimension seems to make only a slight contribution to the level of norm learning, and was unexpectedly positively related to the intensity. Although all differences are highly significant, it should be pointed out that the statistical tests performed are sensitive to the large number of respondents involved in this investigation. Nevertheless, basic findings indicate that family communication patterns have a limited impact on the anticipatory socialization of adolescents. It appears that the factor of the family communication environment in the home plays an important role in political socialization and deserves further investigation.

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TABLE 1

Family Communication Pattern Typology

Socio-Oriented Communication		Concept-Oriented Communication: Low	Concept-Oriented Communication: High
	Low	Laissez-faire (N= 345)	Pluralistic (N= 317)
	High	Protective (N= 277)	Consensual (N= 353)

TABLE 2

Mean Level of Political Participation Norm Learning,
by Family Communication Pattern Typology

	Pluralistic (N= 317)	Consensual (N= 353)	Laissez-Faire (N= 345)	Protective (N= 277)
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.				
mean	3.42	3.37	3.23	3.24
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.				
mean	3.60	3.47	3.41	3.35
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.				
mean	3.59	3.46	3.32	3.33
Overall sum of three measures				
overall mean	10.61	10.30	9.95	9.92

5= must do this
4= probably should do this
3= may or may not do this; don't know
2= probably should not do this
1= must not do this

TABLE 3

Mean Intensity of Political Participation Norm Learning, by Family Communication Pattern Typology

	Pluralistic (N=317)	Consensual (N=353)	Laissez-faire (N=345)	Protective (N=277)
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.				
mean	1.39	1.43	1.23	1.35
percentage of "don't knows"	6.0%	6.4%	14.2%	9.3%
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.				
mean	1.59	1.54	1.45	1.49
percentage of "don't knows"	8.1%	8.0%	12.3%	9.2%
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.				
mean	1.57	1.56	1.41	1.47
percentage of "don't knows"	6.7%	8.3%	14.9%	10.0%
Overall sum of three measures				
overall mean	4.55	4.52	4.09	4.32
overall percentage of "don't knows"	6.9%	7.6%	13.8%	9.5%

3 = must do this; must not do this
2 = probably should do this; probably should not do this
1 = may or may not do this
0 = don't know

TABLE 4

Relationships between Socio- and Concept-Orientation and Level of Norm Learning, Controlling Family Socio-Economic Status

	Concept-Orientation		Socio-Orientation	
	Raw r	Partial r	Raw r	Partial r
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.	+.14	+.12	-.02	+.01
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.	+.12	+.11	-.06	-.03
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.	+.16	+.14	-.02	.00
Overall sum of three measures	+.18	+.16	-.04	-.01

(Partial r controls for years of education and amount of income, as reported by the parent).

Note: Cell entries are Pearson rs, and differ from zero at the following significance levels:

$r \geq .08$, $p < .05$
$r > .10$, $p < .01$
$r \geq .13$, $p < .001$

Concept-orientation is scored from 50 (low) to 150 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate positively with norm learning variables.

Socio-orientation is scored from 40 (low) to 140 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate negatively with norm learning variables.

TABLE 5

Relationships between Socio- and Concept-Orientation and Intensity of Norm Learning, Controlling Family Socio-Economic Status

	Concept-Orientation		Socio-Orientation	
	Raw r	Partial r	Raw r	Partial r
Others will feel you have an obligation to work in political campaigns for a candidate or party.	+.11	+.09	+.06	+.09
Others will feel you have an obligation to write to politicians and newspapers when you have strong opinions on current issues.	+.08	+.07	.00	+.02
Others will feel you have an obligation to attend rallies or meetings to support causes that you think are right.	+.11	+.10	+.03	+.05
Overall sum of three measures	+.12	+.10	+.03	+.06

(Partial r controls for years of education and amount of income, as reported by the parent)

Note: Cell entires are Pearson rs, and differ from zero at the following significance levels:

$r \geq .08$, $p < .05$
$r > .10$, $p < .01$
$r \geq .13$, $p < .001$

Concept-orientation is scored from 50 (low) to 150 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate positively with norm learning variables.

Socio-orientation is scored from 40 (low) to 140 (high). It is hypothesized that this dimension will relate negatively with norm learning variables.